

Lostine Corridor Public Safety Project Eagle Cap Ranger District

Joseph, OR: The Lostine Corridor Public Safety Project is located along an 11 mile road corridor into the Eagle Cap Wilderness in Wallowa County, Oregon. The road travels along the Lostine Wild and Scenic River and provides access to popular developed recreation opportunities.

The Lostine Corridor is a cherished landscape by many local residences and visitors, with outstanding scenic, fisheries, wildlife and botanical values. There are also many historic and recreation values, including a Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) era guard station, 7 campgrounds and 3 developed trailheads. Private lands with residential developments are located within the corridor. For many decades, the vegetation in the corridor was only lightly managed so as to avoid impacts to the many corridor values.

Unfortunately, the result has been forest stands in decreasing health that are currently posing high risks to the public who use and enjoy the corridor. Residents, visitors and emergency services agencies have shared concerns about the increasing number and frequency of downed hazard trees along roadways and campgrounds, and increasingly dense and declining forest stands and heavy fuel loads. Many recognize that the values they love in the corridor are at risk of loss as the forest stands become less resilient, and are now asking the Forest Service to address these issues.

The primary concern and purpose of this project is to address the public safety issues in the corridor. Secondly, the project will address risks to the other values in the corridor including infrastructure (homes, cabins, recreation improvements, roads), the natural resource values. To reduce risks to these values the Forest Service is proposing the following within the project area boundary (approx. 2,110 acres):

1. Removal of hazard/danger trees that pose a risk to people traveling within the corridor, historical sites, and infrastructure.
2. Creation (through removal of vegetation) of defensible space around identified historical areas (ex. Lostine Guard Station).
3. Remove fuels to increase canopy spacing and decrease both ground and ladder fuels and to decrease the risk of potential high intensity wildfires.
4. Thin dense forest stands to improve forest health and resilience to insects, disease and wildfire.

The project will also assess opportunities to provide wood products for local markets, including firewood, through implementation.

The Forest Service will be working closely with the public and cooperating agencies to design a project that can meet the important public safety objectives while also reducing the potential effects of the proposed actions on other corridor values, such as recreation, scenic quality and fish habitat. For example, implementing the project during the winter could avoid disruptions

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to use of the corridor during the summer and could reduce ground disturbing impacts and the spread of weeds.

We are working to complete the planning and analysis for this project by Oct 2016.

The Forest Service encourages those of you who are interested in this project to become involved in the planning process by providing us with your comments on this project and visiting with our staff. Please submit written comments to:

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, Wallowa Mountains Office
Attention: Lostine Public Safety Project (Sitka Pence)
PO Box 905
Joseph, Oregon 97846

Email comments to sitkapence@fs.fed.us. To submit comments by telephone, or for more information about the project, please contact Sitka Pence at (541) 426-5689. Please submit your comments by March 10th 2016. Comments provided as well as the name and address of the person providing the comments, will become a matter of public record. Thank you for reviewing this proposal and participating in this analysis.



Acting District Ranger Jacob S. Lubera



Date

